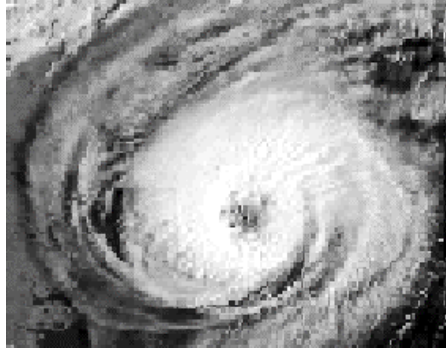


WHAT IS A HURRICANE?

A hurricane is a tropical storm with winds that have reached a constant speed of 74 miles per hour or more. The eye of a storm is usually 20-30 miles wide and may extend over 400 miles. The dangers of a hurricane include high winds, torrential rains and storm surges. Atlantic hurricanes begin off the coast of Africa or in the Bahamas.



Satellite Image of a hurricane, the dark spot in the center is the eye.

Some common terms associated with hurricanes:

Cyclone - A low pressure area with rotating winds, often associated with clouds and precipitation.

Tropical Depression - A tropical cyclone in which the maximum sustained surface wind is 38 mph or less.

Tropical Storm - A tropical cyclone with wind speeds of 39-73 miles per hour. Tropical storms have the potential to become hurricanes.

Hurricane Watch - Hurricane conditions pose a possible threat to a specified area within 36 hours.

Hurricane Warning - Hurricane conditions pose a threat to a specified area within 24 hours or less.

Storm Surge - An abnormal rise of sea level along the shore due to the high winds of a storm.

Flash Flood Watch - Flash flood conditions are possible within a designated area.

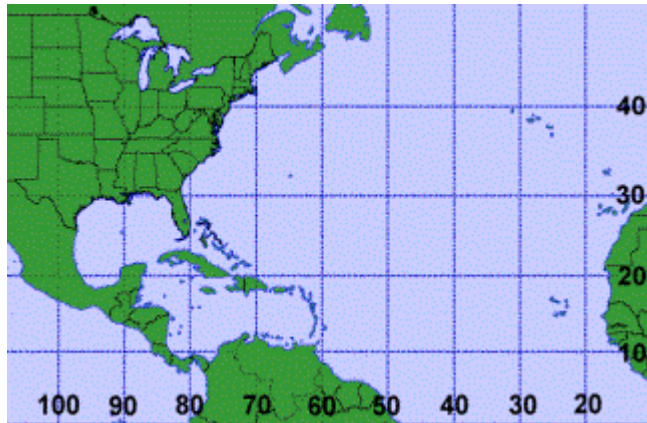
Flash Flood Warning - Flash floods have been reported or are imminent.

Saffir Simpson Scale - Measures the disaster potential of hurricanes.

SAFFIR SIMPSON SCALE				
Winds (mph)	Surge	Sustained Winds (mph)	Storm Surge (feet)	Damage
1		74 - 95	4-5	Minimal
2		96 - 110	6-8	Moderate
3		111 - 130	9-12	Extensive
4		131 - 155	13 - 18	Extreme
5		156 or more	higher than 18	Catastrophic

3 important things to remember about Hurricanes that hit New England:

1. Any tropical storm with a name that enters the Bahamas has the possibility to affect Massachusetts. This does not mean it will definitely reach the state, but the storm should be monitored.
2. Predicted time of landfall is not when the storm will begin to be felt. The first bad effects of the storm may arrive up to 13 hours before landfall.
3. In New England, hurricanes typically exhibit wind that is worse to the east, while heavy rain falls mainly to the west.



This is a typical Atlantic hurricane tracking chart. Courtesy of WBZ Channel 7 at www.7almanac.com.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF THERE IS A HURRICANE?

Before the Storm

The best way to protect yourself and your family from the effects of a hurricane is to be prepared.

- Plan and practice evacuation routes. Your community may have a designated route, contact the local emergency management agency for details.
- Assemble a disaster supply kit. <link this to our disaster supply kit page>
- Make arrangements for pets. It is the policy of shelters not to allow pets. You may want to contact animal boarding facilities or hotels for emergency information.
- Protect your windows. Permanent shutters are the best protection, but plywood panels will also work.
- Purchase flood insurance.
- Develop an emergency communication plan. If family members get separated during a disaster it is helpful to have a friend or relative, outside the impacted area, who can be contacted and told everyone is ok.

During a Watch

- Listen to radio and television for hurricane reports.
- Check emergency supplies.
- Fuel car.
- Bring in objects such as toys or patio furniture. Anchor objects that cannot be brought inside.
- Secure windows with shutters, boards or tape.
- Store drinking water in clean bathtubs, jugs, bottles, etc.
- Review evacuation plan.
- Moor boats securely or remove them from the water.

During a Warning

- Listen constantly to radio or television for updates and instructions.
- If in a mobile home, evacuate immediately.
- Store valuables in waterproof containers on high levels to avoid water damage from flooding.
- Elevate furniture to protect it from water damage.
- Stay inside, away from windows, skylights and glass doors.

If Evacuation is Necessary

- Leave as soon as possible. Follow authorized evacuation routes.
- Avoid flooded roads and watch for washed-out bridges.
- Secure your home by unplugging appliances and turning off electricity and the main water valve.
- Bring pre-assembled emergency supplies kit and warm protective clothing.
- Lock up home and leave.

After the Storm

- Stay tuned to local radio and television stations for information on returning to your home.
- Return home only after authorities advise that it is safe to do so.
- Help injured or trapped people.
- Avoid loose or dangling power lines. Report them immediately to utility companies, police or the fire department.
- Enter your home with caution.
- Beware of animals, insects and snakes that may have entered your home in flood water.
- Open windows and doors to ventilate and dry your home.
- Check refrigerated foods for spoilage.
- Take pictures of the house and damaged goods for insurance claims.
- Drive only if necessary, rescue and maintenance crews need to be able to travel freely.
- Use the telephone only for emergency calls.